

## Synopsis

Middle America wars with self-styled revolutionaries over an egregious Hamburger, centerpiece of a pseudo Pennsylvania Dutch restaurant. Mac and Diane, described as tourists, or, unfairly, "America's lowlife on the move," encounter the Professor and Porkpie, tutor and pupil, who proceed to savage them and everything American.

Diane's life is further complicated by Mac's being in the initial stage of a disease which eventually turns men to stone.

All this is witnessed by the Cook and Waiter, who take the Dutch motif to absurd lengths, and communicate by walkie talkies prone to screeching feedback.

A late arrival is the Hunter, a violent stereotype, who vows to force civility.

The Professor has vaguely promised a "happening," and it arrives in the person of a burning girl, sacrificing herself for his cultist baloney.

A Policeman restores order, but not before an equally horrendous event, and the Professor expounding on the first horror via live TV.

It's a comedy, honest.

In the 2d Act we have a reunion, to check on those who witnessed the trauma. We find that those present have gained maturity, and have used that bizarre day as a springboard to higher education, all having achieved the doctoral level.

They discuss the old events while drinking Margaritas, and point to future exploitation of the commercial possibilities:  
ceramic statue of the burning girl etc.

Targets include education and international capitalism, but not in a propagandistic way. This kind of comedy underlines and undermines everything, often itself. But that's all too intellectual. I hope the people laugh.

## Character Breakdown

DIANE, around thirty-five, a ditzy housewife enamored of adult education

MAC, around forty-five, a formerly ebullient businessman, now gripped by a disease that turns men to stone

COOK, 30, and mostly over-demonstrative in word and action

WAITER, a teen. He doesn't want to be there, especially in the cornball uniform of the day.

PROFESSOR, 30, half an ardent revolutionary, half a fat fraud.  
A dangerous combination

PORKPIE, a teen--he wears a porkpie hat. Professor's follower and sex partner.

HUNTER, 40, a violent stereotype

POLICEMAN, 25, workaday, believes in routine and its relationship to order.

letter of intent

Vietnamese monks' self-immolations triggered the idea initially: what if something like this happened in front of a Burger King or other fast food place?

The Pennsylvania Dutch motif opened up more satirical possibilities.

Problems: Play is talky. Not enough for the eye. Or silences to rest the ear. These things can be worked out.

I've had my plays developed before, notably at Guthrie2, and found the process yeasty, if threatening, then. As Martin Landau said to an Actor's Workshop audience, "It's not about

comfort."

In other forms of writing, you ask yourself: What do I have here? You change a line, the concept changes; you change another line.... In theater, you ask the same question, and all present will give you an answer. That distinguishes writing for the theater--with every extension of that verb.

And when you respond, you frequently realize you don't know what you're talking about. So, you have to learn. From others.

I'd like that chance with this play.

and what accomp at NPC/2000

practical

wordy

outrageous

when to subordinate the joke

writing for the eye

actors can tell you when it's already been said

when you hear it does it sound like speech

What do I have here?

Ideas evolve better in theater

not a comfortable process

since philosophical and literary underpinnings can be jarred.

"Artistic" response

The way I saw it. In retrospect, specious validity but not answer for anyone seeking to build his own craft.

Forces you to know your ideas and characters

Whatever pretensions you're foisting at the time.